Community Spotlight: Optimal Health Program

What does ‘health’ mean to you? For Jenelle Walker, PhD, health encompasses every aspect of life, including spiritual, mental, and physical wellness. This notion is central to the Optimal Health Program that Dr. Walker is carrying out in the refugee community in Phoenix. Dr. Walker is currently a Health Disparities Science postdoctoral fellow in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation, working with Drs. Colleen Keller and Barbara Ainsworth at ASU. She is also an adjunct faculty member in the Health Sciences program. Her research focuses on healthy lifestyle behaviors and her expertise is in physical activity. She developed the Optimal Health Program along with researchers from ASU and the Refugee Women’s Health Clinic (RWHC). The program aims to engage refugee women of African descent in a conversation about health and promote positive health behaviors.

Motivation
Dr. Walker is passionate about reducing health disparities. She first became interested in the refugee community after hearing Dr. Crista Johnson-Agbakwu of the RWHC speak at a seminar. The RWHC is part of Maricopa Integrated Health System and is the first clinic of its kind nationally. Seeing the challenges and stresses this vulnerable population faces, as well as the lack of research and health promotion programs to address these issues, inspired Dr. Walker to take action. She became involved with the Refugee Women’s Health Community Advisory Coalition (RWHCAC), led by the Clinic’s Program Manager, Jeanne Nizigiyimana, and currently serves as co-chair of the Research Subcommittee. The RWCCAC Research Subcommittee forms partnerships with the community in order to carry out research that directly benefits the community.

Community-based model
Community conversations and needs assessments informed Dr. Walker as she created the Optimal Health Program pilot study. The program recruited 36 refugee women of African descent from the community. All of the women speak English or Swahili, but are of all ages and come from many

New year, new strategic plan

This year, the community will begin implementing the 2014-2015 Arizona Refugee Resettlement Statewide Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is the result of multiple planning sessions in 2013 involving community members and stakeholders from Phoenix and Tucson. It outlines measurable, achievable goals and provides focus to the community’s collective efforts to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency.

The strategic plan centers around five Local Priorities: Orientation, Language/Literacy, Employment, Integrated Health, and Pre-K/K-12 Education. Goals for Integrated Health focus on five key topics: cultural competency, behavioral health services, health literacy & health care navigation, the Affordable Care Act, and health care interpretation.

In order to implement the strategic plan, a Refugee Services Consortium is currently being established. The Consortium will consist of five Local Priority Teams responsible for implementing the objectives set forth in the strategic plan. Each Local Priority Team will be led by Co-Chairs nominated by the community, and composed of community members from both Phoenix and Tucson.

Optimal Health Program

(Continued from page 1)

It’s flu season: stay informed!

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed four pamphlets specifically for informing refugee communities about seasonal flu. The pamphlets are written in the native languages of refugee groups. The information is tailored for low literacy populations, containing many images and simple text.

The Seasonal Flu Materials for Refugees are available in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Dzongkha, English, Farsi, Karen, Kirundi, Nepali, Oromo, Somali, and Spanish.

Please access these resources at http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/resources/index.html.

Dr. Jenelle Walker (center) leads a group dance session.

Did you know?
The flu season often peaks during February of each year.

Information is the key to ensuring everyone is healthy during this flu season. It is important for everyone to know the symptoms of the flu, how to prevent the spread of the disease, and what to do if a family member has the flu.

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Refugee Health 2013: A Year in Review

REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN 2013
In 2013, Arizona resettled a total of 3,336 refugees!

Top 10 Countries of Origin

Arrivals by County

SCREENING CLINIC RESULTS IN 2013
All refugees are screened within 90 days of arrival to Arizona.

Behavioral Health Condition

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES REPORTED IN 2013
Data from Medical Electronic Disease Surveillance Intelligence System (MEDSIS) for 2013.

Top 3 Countries of Origin
Research Spotlight


Upcoming Events

Wednesday, February 19, 2014—Eat Well and Stay Healthy Workshop, Pima County Health Department
5:30 PM—7:30 PM at Eckstrom-Columbus Branch Library, 4350 E. 22nd St, Tucson, AZ
Part 1 of a two-part program. All community members are welcome to learn about finding healthy food for your family. Find out how to enroll in WIC and SNAP, use vouchers, discover nutritious food, and make healthy choices. Information will be presented in English and Swahili.

Wednesday, February 26, 2014—Webinar: Substance Abuse and the Torture Survivor Experience, National Partnership for Community Training
11:00 AM—12:15 PM Register at goo.gl/F2zn95
In order to cope, forget, or ignore the impact of trauma some refugees and torture survivors may turn to substance use. This webinar will introduce substance abuse issues, address apprehension and stigma that may exist in the community, and offer guidance and best practices for community members.

Saturday, March 8, 2014—Free Health Clinic, Muslim Community Center of Tucson
10:00 AM—1:00 PM at 4727 E. 5th St, Tucson, AZ
Free Health Clinic open to all on the 2nd Saturday of every month. No insurance necessary, Professional Practicing Doctors, Walk-ins welcome. Services include: Physical Exams, Screenings, Referral Services, Chronic Disease Management, Patient Health Education, Pediatric Services, and more.

Monday, March 10, 2014—Preventive Health Collaborative Training: Pediatric Health in Ethnic Communities
9:00 AM—11:00 AM at Roosevelt Wellness Center, 1030 E. Baseline Rd, Phoenix, AZ
Learn from physicians working in ethnic communities about the impact family traditions and perspectives have on pediatric health. Featuring Maricopa Integrated Health Systems Pediatric Medical Home Care Coordinators.

For additional events and contact information, please visit the News & Events page at A2refugeehealth.org.

Funding Opportunities

Champions for Healthy Kids—The General Mills Foundation
Amount: 20,000
Eligibility: Sustainable, effective programs working to improve nutrition and physical fitness behaviors for youth. Programs must be focused on youth ages 2-18, incorporate physical education and nutrition education, and involve the oversight of a registered dietician or registered dietetic technician.
Deadline: March 14, 2014

Grant—Safeway Foundation
Amount: 10,000-25,000
Eligibility: Nonprofit organizations whose mission focuses on hunger relief, education, health and human services, and/or assisting people with disabilities.
Deadline: April 2014 (quarterly)
http://www.safewayfoundation.org/get-funded/index.html

State Giving Program (AZ) - The Wal-Mart Foundation
Amount: 25,000-250,000
Eligibility: Programs focused on Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating or Career Opportunity. (Examples: efforts that aim to enroll people in SNAP, healthy eating/cooking skills training, nutrition education programs, and career skills or job training efforts that lead to placement.)
Deadline: April 26, 2014
http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/state-giving

Charitable Donations—Albertsons LLC
Amount: as needed
Eligibility: Events that address hunger relief, health, nutrition, or youth and education.
Deadline: at least 6 weeks prior to the event

For additional funding opportunities, please visit the News & Events page at A2refugeehealth.org.